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State of Suds

Just when you think this town can't get any more into beer, or any more into hoppy beers, Eugene is like, "Hold my beer."

In our annual State of Suds issue, we dive into the beer scene as we look at non-hoppy beers, Oregon hops' immigrant history and brewfests and talk to a beer scientist about brews and feminism in the beer industry.

And beer news is always hopping; a quick survey of recent beer news tidbits reveals that **Plank Town Brewing** has a new location in Pleasant Hill opening in July that will be known as Hilltop Bar & Grill.

Ninkasi's Kegs for McKenzie is running from Earth Day, April 22 to June 30, with a goal of raising \$50,000 for preserving and protecting the McKenzie River, the main water source for Eugene and for Ninkasi's suds, by donating \$20 of every Ninkasi keg sold at participating bars and restaurants to benefit the McKenzie River Trust and its McKenzie Homewaters Campaign.

Elk Horn Brewery will debut its SirBerlin-erweiss, a lychee and lemon-grass Berliner Weisse named after SirBerlin, a long-time employee from the Philippines at this year's 30th Annual Oregon Brewer's Festival in Portland's Waterfront Park in July. "This brew uses ingredients from his native country, combining into a refreshing and easily drinkable beer," the brewery tells us. After the brewfest, this light, slightly sour and fruity brew will be available in Elk Horn's Eugene brewpub.

Hop Valley Brewing has released Reveal beer to benefit local and regional LGBTQ organizations, including the Pride Foundation. Hop Valley says, "Working with LGBTQ bar owners and industry veterans (including The Wayward Lamb) to craft the beer from scratch, Reveal is now available on tap and in bottles in Oregon, Washington and Northern California."

On the federal level, back in January, Sen. Ron Wyden introduced the **Craft Beverage Modernization and Tax Reform Act of 2017**. According to the Brewers Association, made up of small and independent craft brewers, the bill "seeks to reform burdensome laws regulating America's brewers and beer importers, wineries and distilled spirits producers and recalibrate the current federal excise tax structure, fostering economic development and innovation in the industry." The brewers say that as of mid-June, the bill is supported by the majority of the House of Representatives.

Got more brew news? Send tips to bizbeat@eugeneweekly.com
— Camilla Mortensen

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Untold Hop History

Shedding light on the legacy of Chinese hop farmers *By Carl Segerstrom*

The bitter fruit of the hop plant is at the heart of Oregon's burgeoning microbrew industry. Oregon is second in the country only to our northern neighbor in terms of hop production. While hops are ubiquitous in the crafting and marketing of Oregon brews, the history of hop cultivation by Chinese immigrants in the Northwest is largely an untold story.

In the historical memory of the American West, Chinese laborers are often recalled as the builders of the railroads and as miners, but not as hop farmers. The stereotypical industriousness and work ethic that Chinese laborers are remembered for also extended to the hop fields, where growers hired the Chinese despite racist laws and attitudes.

For journalist and author Putsata Reang, the story of Chinese laborers in the hop fields started to form when she heard an audio recording of Ming Kee, who grew up tending fields that his father, Dong Kee, rented but was unable to own near Aurora.

"There was something in Ming Kee's voice that struck me as sad," Reang says. "There was a sense of almost a helpless resignation. He understood how unfair it was, but his family continued to work hard and lead the best life they could."

The story stayed with Reang, herself a Cambodian-American refugee, because growing up in Corvallis she and her family had firsthand knowledge of the sweat and toil that goes into agricultural work. "My siblings and I spent summers picking strawberries, blueberries and raspberries all up and down the Willamette — all the way up until and even after we graduated high school," Reang says.

"It taught me an absolute respect and love for agriculture, and it also taught me the bittersweet lesson of being an immigrant and coming to a country with nothing," she says. "The story of the hop farmers really struck a chord because I understand and my family understands how hard that labor is. I don't wish that life on anybody."

Reang's essay "Bitter Harvest" for the This Land story series of the Oregon Humanities Project takes readers on a journey into the history of Chinese hop farmers during the beginning of the 20th century. Reang recounts the many toils as well as the rare successes of Chinese hop farmers along with the racism the laborers faced.

According to historian Peter Kopp, Chinese laborers were paid 80 cents for every dollar a grower would pay a white man, a further ten cents less than indigenous workers, who made 90 cents on the white man's dollar.

"It's heartbreaking to know the obstacles that they had to overcome," Reang says. She also connects the experience of Chinese immigrants to the bigotry experienced by Muslims and other immigrants today. "The reality of the situation is there are always policies that are going to stop people from getting ahead."

The targeting of immigrant communities continues to be a problem, she says. "It's an ugly cycle, but it is a cycle of our history."

Kopp, the author of *Hoptopia: A World of Agriculture and Beer in Oregon's Willamette Valley*, provides many insights into the plight of Chinese hop farmers. Reang also credits Tiah Edmunson-Morton, the archivist for the Oregon Hops and Brewing Archives at Oregon State University, for her "tremendous help" in researching the history of Chinese immigrants in the hop industry.

Local brewers *EW* contacted were not aware of this history.

While the story describes the racism that disenfranchised and limited opportunities for Chinese laborers, the story, much like Reang's own experience, is also about overcoming odds and immigrant's tirelessly pursuing their own versions of the American Dream.

Hop Lee, whose name seemed to presage his destiny, came to own 600 acres of land overlooking the Willamette River in Keizer, on some of which he cultivated hops. He was able to purchase the property only because his wife was a Chinese-American born in California, which allowed them to work around laws that prohibited Chinese from owning land.

Nearly 100 years later, Reang says she continues to see both the opportunities and challenges that immigrants face. "My family was intimately familiar with chasing the American dream as refugees fleeing Cambodia," Reang says. "We realized if you work hard you can get ahead, and that's true for many immigrants, but it's not true for everyone."

She points to her own experience of going from picking fruit as a youth to becoming a successful journalist and writer, and says she is thankful for the opportunities she's been able to earn. "I hope that this story doesn't leave people with the idea that immigrants are somehow victims," Reang says.

When Reang left her home in Corvallis to go to the University of Oregon, her parents moved to Keizer to be closer to the Cambodian community there. Their home would later provide the setting for their daughter's story of immigrant struggle and achievement.

"The irony is where they moved is literally in the heart of where all these hop fields still are," Reang says. "All these years I would drive by and it never once occurred to me that perhaps these exact same fields were where Hop Lee had his farm." ■

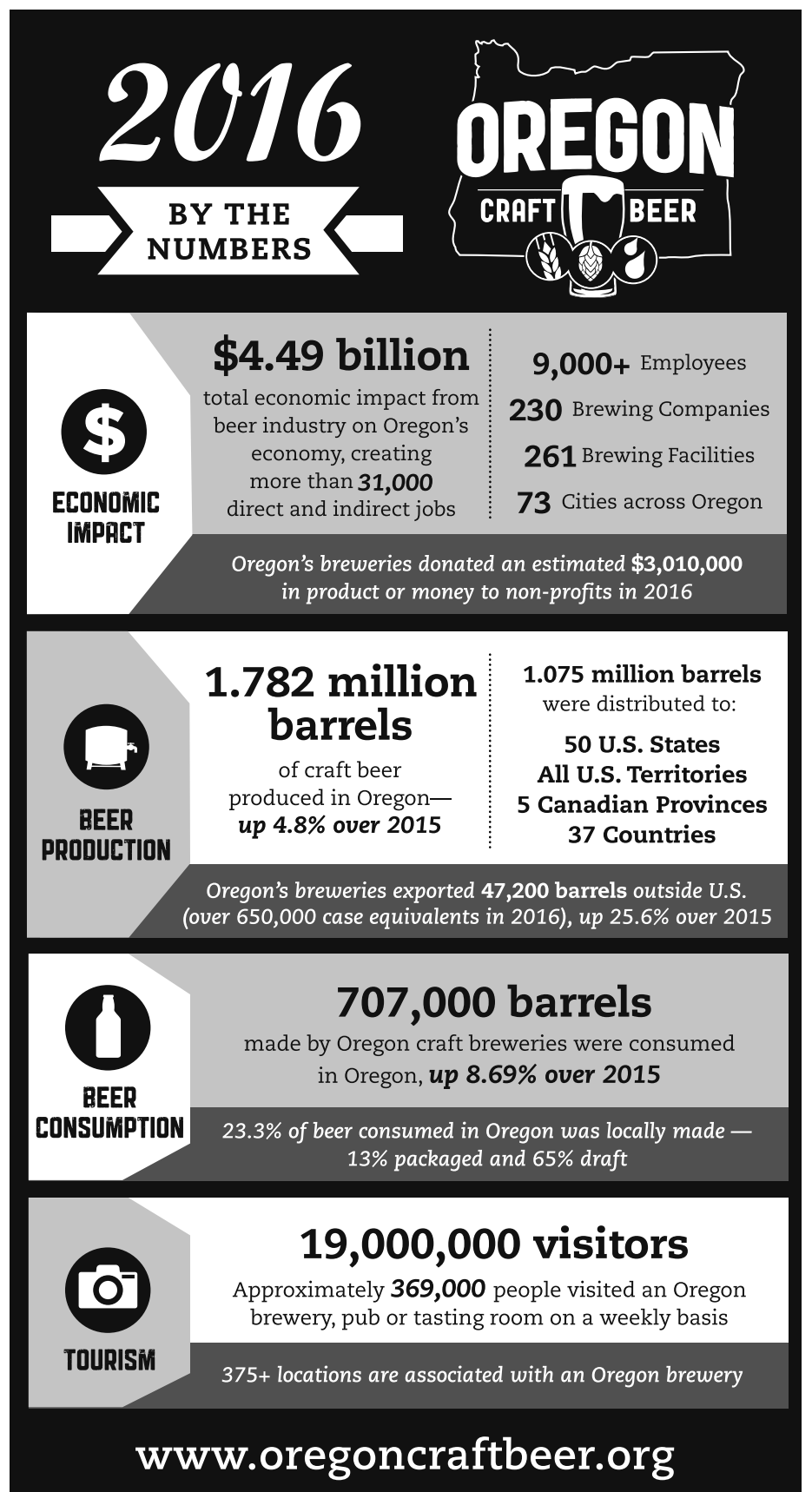
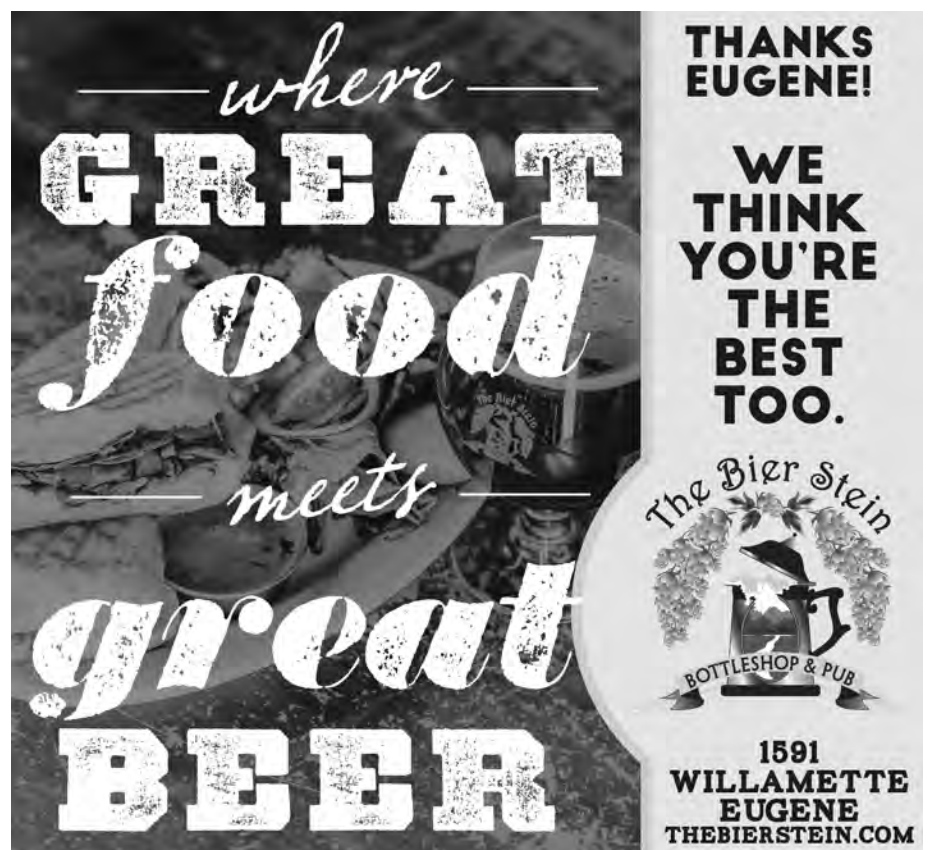




PHOTO: THE OREGON GARDEN

Beer Festivals

Oregon Garden Beer Festival — and more *By Corinne Boyer*

Thirty minutes east of Salem, the Oregon Garden in Silverton hosts weddings, movie screenings, seasonal events and, this year, a weekend-long eclipse celebration in the 80-acre botanical garden. One of the garden's biggest annual celebrations is the Oregon Garden Brewfest.

The scenic beerfest turned 13 this year, and the three-day event featured 120 beers from 52 producers as well as live music and food trucks tucked into the garden's Rediscovery Forest.

The garden itself was designed at the request of the Oregon Association of Nurseries, and its wetlands were constructed to recycle treated wastewater. Silverton needed a way to cool its wastewater after treatment, and the wetlands accomplish that, says Sara Hammond with the Oregon Garden.

The grounds opened in 2001 and consist of a water garden, a Northwest garden, and a family- and pet-friendly garden and wetlands.

The Oregon Garden Beer fest has car, RV and tent camping options. Attendees can also stay at the Oregon Garden Resort, located on the property. The rooms are spacious and cozy and have views of the wide green expanses and mountains.

"We're always looking for new ways for guests to experience the Garden, and hope the camping will encourage them to venture and explore more areas than they ever have before," Hammond says.

To kick off the beer festivities, the Oregon Garden

Resort hosts the Brewer's Tasting Dinner — a six-course meal prepared by the Oregon Garden restaurant staff paired with special beers from selected brewfest participants. This year's dessert was a sweet lemon custard paired with a raspberry cucumber beer with mint from Mazama Brewery in Corvallis. *EW* got to sample the pairing thanks to an invite to the Brewfest.

Natalie and Jonathan Weste of Keizer have attended Brewfest for the past three years. Natalie Weste says she enjoys the location. "It's way more low-key than a lot of the Portland brew fests, and it reminds me of the festivals in California," she says.

Jonathan Weste says he likes the fact that a lot of the beers are local to Oregon and Washington.

Eugene-based Agrarian Ales is participating in the festival for the first time this year. Located on a 25-acre farm, its beers are brewed in a barn, so the end product somewhat varies, which is a good thing, Mike Naylor, with Agrarian Ales, says. Factors like humidity and temperature can't be totally controlled in the barn's environment, but "people like variety," Naylor says.

"We grasp onto the fact that we're consistent about being inconsistent," he says.

If you missed Brewfest, don't worry: There are many local beer events each year.

On Aug. 12, be sure to travel Highway 58 to Oakridge and check out the ninth annual Oakridge Keg & Cask Festival. Proceeds from the fest go to local nonprofits like the Local Food Box and the Uptown Business & Revitalization Association.

As the air begins to get crisp, check out the Sasquatch Brewfest, created in memory of Glen Hay Falconer. This year's fest will be held on Sept. 30 in the Whiteaker. The event showcases Northwest craft beer, and funds raised at the beer fest support brewing education scholarships. The Glen Falconer Foundation has awarded 38 scholarships so far.

Eugene Beer Week was held June 5 through June 11 with beer tastings, food-pairing dinners and several events at Falling Sky, Hop Valley, Ninkasi, The Beer Garden and local bottle shops. Put on to highlight the superb local breweries, Beer Week was originally held alongside the Sasquatch Brewfest to honor Falconer.

One of Eugene's largest beer events is KLCC's Microbrew Festival. It began in 2002 and features dozens of breweries with approximately 175 beers at the Lane Events Center every February. Despite being held in the dead of the Willamette Valley's rainy winter, this brewfest offers collaboration beers crafted especially for the KLCC fest.

The event also hosts brewing competitions recognizing the best people's choice, sponsor's choice and home-brew beers. Designated drivers get in for a discounted price, and volunteers are always needed to help put on the event. Volunteers receive free tickets to the festival — when they aren't working a volunteer shift.

Whether you're into upbeat events or chill, forested beer tastings, Eugene and the surrounding areas are home to some of the best brews in the country, and we're not just saying that because we live here.

Enjoy all beer fests to the fullest with a designated driver. ■

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Feeling Hopless

Beer for those of us who hate bitterness *By Kelly Kenoyer*

I had my first sip of beer around the age of 14. I curiously asked my dad for a taste of his IPA. He raised an eyebrow, handed me the bottle, and I cautiously took a sip.

The bitter hoppiness of it deterred me from beer, and alcohol itself, for a few more years.

In college I gave beer another try, but the crappy canned

Keystone Lights didn't do much for me either. Why did beer either taste like piss-water or spinach?

Of course, hops are one of the four key ingredients in beer, the others being malt, water and yeast. Without all hops, beer would be some other, much more pointless drink. I'm not talking about all hops, but about the bitter flavors that hops can induce in beer, often categorized as

"hoppiness."

It took me until my 20s to realize that there was a whole world of beer that was flavorful and affecting without being pointlessly bitter. I still get teased occasionally about my distaste for that bitter flavor by my masochistic hipster friends who love to drink liquid suffering, but I've found that there's plenty of quality suds in the region if you look hard enough.

Now the first thing I look for on drink menus is a little number dictating IBU — international bittering units. I try to avoid drinking anything over 40 IBU for the sake of my sanity.

If you're looking for un-bitter beer in the perilous Pacific Northwest, let me be your guide.

Oakshire Baltic Porter, 35 IBU, 7.8 percent alcohol by volume (ABV), Eugene

This porter isn't your typical porter. Though I liked it quite a bit, several other tasters disagreed entirely. It's creamy, with a bittersweet finish that might make you question your position on hops. It's surprisingly light and smoky for a porter, and makes for good summer drinking.

pFriem Pilsner, 38 IBU, 4.9 percent ABV, Hood River

The pFriem Pilsner came recommended by a number of beer lovers, but I found it underwhelming. Though it's very drinkable, it's nothing special. I would compare it to a Heineken or a Corona, though it has a handsome German-inspired label. For your money, you can find better flavor in an ale or Kölsch.

Claim 52 Kölsch, 15 IBU, 5.2 percent ABV, Eugene

This Kölsch is a crowd pleaser — the perfect thing to bring to a barbeque or hangout by the river. This German-style pale ale is cheap for a micro-brew but doesn't taste cheap. It's a perfectly balanced light-colored beer for any occasion.

Rogue Hazelnut Brown Nectar, 33 IBU, 5.6 percent ABV, Ashland

This brown is one of my favorite beers of all time. Smooth and malty with an aroma of hazelnut, it's light for a brown and makes for the perfect tallboy to bring to a party. There's a delicate, authentic aftertaste of hazelnut, and the creamy flavor makes this feel like the perfect beer companion to a rainy day and a novel.

Sam Bond's Filbert Brown Ale, 23 IBU, 4.9 percent ABV, Eugene

Another hazelnut flavored brown, this one has a nice chocolate-y flavor with spiced notes. I thought I got a whiff of cloves or nutmeg, but it's hard to say. This one isn't as balanced as the Rogue brown — it's a little heavy on the caramel flavors and might be trying just a bit too hard. But I'd certainly drink it on tap at any bar if I were feeling up to something hip and trendy.

If none of these tasty taps are available at your bar, here are some tips on how to avoid the bitterest of brews:

- Check the IBU if it's available. This is a great marker that more bars and breweries should publicize. Stay under 40 or 50 IBU if hoppy isn't your thing.

- Ales, hefeweizens, saisons and lagers are generally pretty trustworthy, though ales often lack other exciting flavors. Generally if the word "cream" is in the name of the beer, it's not too bitter.

- Don't be afraid to try browns, stouts, reds and sours! These are often more flavorful than the lighter beers listed above, and sours have fascinating flavor profiles that I've come to love.

Reds are often delightful, though you should ask for a taster because they can often be slightly bitter. Stouts are flavorful, dark beers perfect in winter. Similar to reds, they're not always to be trusted, but they make some of my favorites. Try the Obsidian Stout from Deschutes Brewery for a great example. Others swear by the Ninkasi Vanilla Oats stout.

- If it's an IPA from a Northwest brewery, I wouldn't bother. The PNW is known for overhopping its beer, and IPAs usually bear the brunt of that pain. Cringing through a bitter brew is not a good way to impress that good looking hipster hovering by the bar. Luckily, those same micro-breweries often have plenty of other options for those of us who love drinking booze that actually tastes good.

Best of all, ask your bartender! They'll know the tap list better than anyone, and if you tell them you hate hoppiness they'll help you out. Don't forget to tip, and happy drinking! ■

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Q&A Feminism & Beer Science

Craft beer, quality testing and being a woman in the beer world *By Tran Nguyen*

Beer scientist Dana Garves brewed her first batch of beer with her dad in their Seattle home's basement when she was 17. Garves says her mom was furious, but the memory has fueled her love for craft beer ever since.

Garves studied chemistry at the University of Oregon, where she put together a database of chemistry experiment resources for teachers from K-12 through grad school. She then took a job doing water quality testing at a local company in Eugene, but quickly found it unsatisfying.

Soon after, Garves found herself in the Ninkasi beer lab working as a beer technician, where in 2014 she

developed six vials of yeast to send to space to brew a beer called Ground Control.

At Ninkasi, where she developed a love for the craft beer community in Eugene, Garves also saw a fast-growing demand for quality control in commercial brewing.

She knew it was her chance to shake up the craft beer industry. By the end of 2014, Garves dropped her secure job at Ninkasi and started Oregon BrewLab out of her garage.

One of the few quality-testing facilities in the nation, Oregon BrewLab provides analysis on alcohol content, calories, IBU, color, pH, degree of fermentation, protein, carbs and total acidity for commercial breweries and homebrewers. The tests cost as little as \$20 each, and

Oregon BrewLab guarantees results within 48 hours.

Within three years, more than 170 clients across the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico have sought her services, Garves says.

"I wanted to do science for people who are curious, who are inquisitive, who have to know the answer — not just estimates," she says.

One of very few women in a male-dominated industry, Garves also uses her platform to speak out against sexism in the craft beer industry and to support other brewers and scientists.

"The one way women could fight this is to trust each other," she says. "If you own a sexist brewery, I don't want to work with you."



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Garves says of sexist beer labels, “I have that ability now that I could turn away clients and say, ‘I don’t really like that beer you make where you are telling me to take my top off.’ That’s not the kind of beer I want to drink. That’s not the kind of beer I want to represent me.”

Eugene Weekly: So you were a UO student. How did you transition to where you are now?

Dana Garves: I spent four really incredible years at Ninkasi. We sent yeast into space. Somewhere around year three and a half or so, I started to realize how many people were bringing beer samples to the Ninkasi lab to be tested. These are professional commercial brewers who felt they didn’t have any place to turn for their analysis, except for this lab that would do it for free. It got to the point where a growler made its way across the nation just to get tested. And that’s sort of this really big epiphany that there’s something missing in this industry that is needed, and that is something I can provide.

So leaving the benefits and the family, leaving all of that was very terrifying, but this is what I want. This is what drives me in the morning. I didn’t know at the time, but Ninkasi was that springboard for me.

What services does your beer lab offer?

Now I only focus on commercial brewers, because they are the ones who want to have their beers tested and have to have their beers tested to follow federal and state regulation. I do pretty much the all analysis that is for your final product. You can send in your final beer product with the same bottle you are going to ship out or the same keg you are going to put on draft.

I also do education of commercial brewers and learning how to create a sensory panel to test your beer in a way that is analytical and not necessary subjective. I also do consumer education, so people can come in and learn how to taste a beer professionally and go through steps of drinking a beer with a critical eye.

In such a male-dominated industry, what does it mean to you to be a woman in the craft beer industry?

I’m a pretty vocal feminist. I don’t hide that in any way, and I have never felt in this industry I have to hide it. The issue where my gender comes into play is so nuanced that it’s difficult to have a conversation with another woman who is in a male-dominated field that isn’t beer.

The sexism I face in this industry is label-related — what’s on the beer, what it’s called, why that lady is half-naked? For instance, I have this client who I have been working with for two or three years, and they handed me this one sample, and it has a pretty offensive name. The brewery said, “Hey, this is the working name for this beer.” But it’s a sexist comment. And I looked at them and asked, “Is this what you think of me?”

“Well, no, why would you say that?”

“Well, I’m a woman, and this beer is named something that’s derogatory towards women so, you know, can you change that?”

They apologized as soon as I pointed it out — the working title got thrown out the window, then I got an apology email from the owner.

I think the sexism issue is going to arise, but my job as an individual and a female is to calmly point it out, “Hey, that’s kind of sexist!” “That kind of thing insults me and everything I do. Sure you don’t want to rethink this?” And the result is they are very amenable. Brewers want to learn, they want to change and they don’t want to be Budweiser. You don’t have to bring down the whole gender to sell beer, man.

I also face sexism when brewers doubt my results — I do have this initial concern that maybe it’s about my gender, that maybe there’s a distrust there because — women in beer, women in beer science. That’s a big leap for a lot of people to take, but luckily in this industry, word of mouth is a very strong bond, and I have so many great brewers who know me and my work ethic and integrity.

They know that if I mess up, I’ll tell you, and I’ll change it and make it better. So it’s not the brewers I have to convince, it’s the casual drinkers.

When I tell people I work in beer, they would assume I work at a tap house, serve beer or in marketing. I think the people outside the industry are the biggest barrier when it comes to my gender. Within the industry, it’s labels, and it’s a big battle.

Do you see any stereotypes about women in the industry? How are you fighting them?

It’s interesting because there are not a lot of us [women]. One of the things that I notice in this industry is that rumors are very common, but generally negative rumors happen about women. Something I have noticed and picked up on is that if you don’t know a female brewer and you just know of her, it’s possible there are negative rumors you have heard about her. “She’s a bitch.” “I heard she slept with this one brewer.” I’ve never heard that said about a male brewer.

If someone gives me a negative account of anyone, I’ll say, “Let me find out for myself how I feel about this person before you give me a spoiler alert.”

We fight it the same way we fight sexism everywhere else: trusting our fellow females and distrusting the patriarchy. I have had brewers contact me and say, “I experienced this sexist comment and I didn’t know how to stand up for that woman. What can I do?”

Those brewers, who know this is wrong but don’t know what the steps are, are the best — the fact that they recognize this is fucked up, that they are able to identify that something’s wrong. I’ll say, “Just say something, that’s it. Squash it, right there.”

But understand that these are isolated events that I’ve accrued in the past seven years — it’s not prevalent; it’s not rampant. And those brewers who do make those comments, who are extremely sexist, they don’t stay in favor very long. I feel like they get outed pretty quick, and people don’t want to work with them. I don’t. ■



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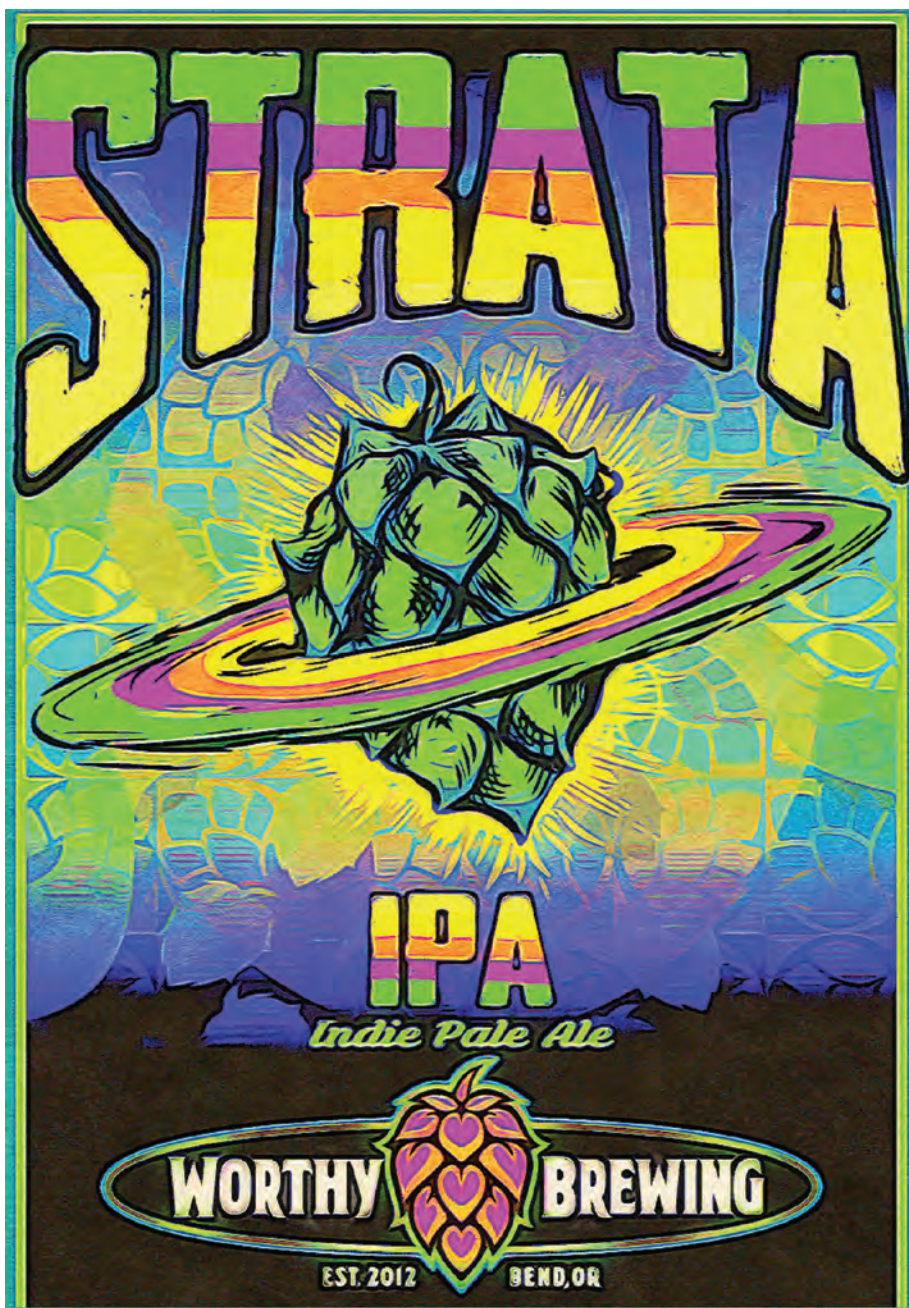
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